



# Amchi-Zine 10.0

*Make the world your stage*

House Bulletin of



**VAA**

VKSSF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION



SOME KIDS ARE SMARTER THAN YOU,  
SOME KIDS HAVE cooler clothes THAN YOU,  
SOME KIDS ARE BETTER AT SPORTS THAN YOU,

**IT DOESN'T MATTER.**

YOU HAVE your THING TOO.

BE THE KID WHO CAN GET ALONG.

BE THE KID WHO IS generous.

BE THE KID WHO IS happy FOR OTHER PEOPLE.

BE THE KID WHO DOES THE RIGHT THING.

**be the nice kid.**

- Bryan Skavnak -



## 10 Years on..

**W**e the alumni of VKSSF still fondly remember the morning of the first scholarship distribution ceremony 10 years ago. Before we even walked the stage and collected our scholarship grants, we understood the responsibility handed to us. The responsibility to make the Konkani community a self-sustained community, empowered to provide access to education for all the young minds who aspired to learn and prosper. We were being groomed to help the next generation of Konkani students become independent in attaining education. To provide support financially and otherwise in helping scholars feel reinforced. And yes, that was the day precisely when an idea called Vishwa Konkani Student Scholarship Fund (VKSSF) was born. An initiative backed by World Konkani Center (WKC) and leaders such as Shri. T.V. Mohandas Pai, Shri. Ramdas Kamath and Shri. Pradeep G. Pai.

Over the past decade however, the mantle of taking the vision of our organization and leaders have undoubtedly been handed over to the scholars of WKC, or should I say, the warriors of WKC. We all have fought against the odds and have achieved immense success in our independent professional and personal lives. We have, despite our shortcomings, learnt our way through difficulties. We have skilled ourselves and have promised to one another to never stop learning. And as we step into a year of celebration for completing 10 years of VKSSF, we must now look ahead and gather steam in pursuit of Vision TVM 2030. A vision statement that aims to provide us all a Konkani community that is strong, vibrant, skilled and resilient to changes. We are all equal stakeholders in making this vision a reality and today is step 1.

As we move forward from today, it is upon all of us to understand the immense opportunity we are provided to be an integral part of a movement that seeks to empower youth of Konkani community. Leaders who have led us so far only led us to create leaders in us. It is not upon us to take the mission and vision forward. It is upon us to support VKSSF in every way possible. It is upon us to help WKC in facilitating VKSSF in the coming years.



However, we all will ask ourselves, why is it upon us to support this organization. Why must we take this forward. Why must we embolden the spirit and strengthen the foundation. Well, look no further, this short compilation is all the answers we are looking for. WKC has built dreams of individuals walking in the door, and you will find those stories in this booklet. We have had numerous cohorts of scholars graduating into alumni's, and you will find out what they have achieved. And am certain, as you reach the final page in this collection, you will understand what we represent, what we stand for, and more importantly what an opportunity we are presented with to fight for our future. And as I said earlier, we are all warriors, aren't we?

**Dinesh Pai**  
Editor-in-Chief

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**Movin Sequeira**

Research Scholar,  
Jönköping University,  
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Senior Software Engineer,  
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Software Engineer,  
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# Nothing can keep you from realising your dream

**Asha Shenoy K.**

Consultant, High Tech Anthropologist  
Menlo Innovations, Michigan (USA)

It all started with a newspaper advertisement that had me apply for a scholarship at the World Konkani Centre. Little did I know that the decision would change the course of my life and career in positive ways. This programme gave me much more than access to education. The life skills training as they are aptly called prepared me not only for employment but for life. The support I received led me to believe in my ambitions and find the courage to pursue my dreams.

I grew up being a quiet person. I identified as a bright student and had honed on my technical skills but lacked heavily in the area of interpersonal skills and confidence. It was the honest feedback offered by my mentors at WKC and the life skills training camps that helped me develop my professional self. During my final year at college, it came as no surprise to my mentors at WKC that I received an offer from my first job interview because the camps had prepared me for that interview throughout the 4 years of my program. I have come a long way since I started my journey with WKC: Working at a multinational software company, graduating with a Master's degree from a reputed university in the United States, teaching Python programming as a student instructor, serving at a non-profit in Cape Town, South Africa, being invited to present a

**It wasn't easy, but this journey has been an experience I wouldn't trade for anything else.**

talk at an interaction design conference and being the graduate speaker representing my cohort at the graduation ceremony, and now working as a Product Designer at a software design firm in the United States.

I've had my fair share of success, but it is my failures and going beyond them that makes me the person I am today. Out of the 7 universities I applied to, I received rejects from 4. My job

search after the graduate program was long and tedious where I didn't hear back from a lot of companies and received rejects beyond what I felt prepared for. Those rejections were hard, but they taught me the value of persistence. I worked two part-time jobs along with a full-time course load to put myself through graduate school. I went beyond my comfort zone and engaged in public speaking and networking. I worked on my communication and interpersonal skills and sought feedback from my peers. It wasn't easy, but this journey has been an experience I wouldn't trade for anything else.

I share this with the hope that if you are someone that couldn't get into the college of your choice or are nervous about making it to your first job after college, you do not let a few rejections bring you down. I want to assure you that there is nothing that can keep you from realising your dream. You can do anything you set your mind to. All you've got to do is have faith in your goal and push harder especially when you think you might give up. The life-skills coaching and mentoring I received at WKC have played a major role in helping me remain persistent during difficult times. This organization has the best facilitators and supportive mentors that put their heart and soul into our success. We now have a strong network of alumni in various companies and educational institutions. You have the best resources available and I hope you will make the most of them because I am excited to witness the amazing things that the upcoming cohorts of WKC will achieve.

It was TV Mohandas Pai's one idea that positively impacted the lives of many Konkani speaking individuals like me. His vision has set us up for success in our lives and careers. I speak for myself here, but I feel this sentiment will be echoed by every WKC scholar: The life skills program at Vishwa Konkani Kendra has brought out the best in me as a person and given me the skills and confidence to take the future head-on. I am grateful for the mentors I've found and the friends I've made at WKC. I'm grateful to Vishwa Konkani for being there for me in the moments of my most need and am eager to see and bring TVM Vision 2030 to life.







# World Konkani Centre, Oxford of Konkani

**Movin Sequeira**

Research Scholar, Jönköping University,  
Sweden.

**M**y first contact with the World Konkani Centre (WKC) and the program was in the year 2011. This program was just in its second year back then.

Now, eight years have passed since my first time, and I still remember my first day at the prestigious WKC as though it was just like yesterday.

On my first day, I met many students from universities around Karnataka and I realized that we all shared the same dreams and ambition. We all wanted to grow together, learn from each other and share the same passion for learning. I have met wonderful people as well, who then become friends for life. Over the years, this program has grown so big that I would never have imagined eight years ago. The program might seem like other 'ordinary' scholarships across the country. However, it is not! This program is not just about receiving a scholarship. It is even more, it stretches out its arms further and thinks about developing the skills of the students, therefore closing the loop of overall development of the student. Most of the students in my year have grown now to become highly successful in their professional lives. The VKSSF conducts scholar's development programs through a three-day camp at its prestigious facility in the World Konkani Centre. For those unaware of the WKC, this center is the "Oxford" of Konkani language and culture.

The three-day camps are successfully been held twice a year,

**we all shared the same dreams and ambition. We all wanted to grow together, learn from each other and share the same passion for learning.**

even now. During my time at the program, I had never missed any of the camps. In every one of them, I had learnt so much and felt that I was always ahead of my classmates who never had such opportunities. This developed confidence and reflected on my placements in the fourth year. Out of all the camps, two of them have left a strong impression on me. The first of them which I would like to mention is on spoken and written language skills. This camp had emphasized the importance of communication skills and effective use of the English language. The camp challenged me to expand my



vocabulary and be eloquent in my speaking. Furthermore, I was rekindled my flame of reading novels (which I had lost prior to this). I found myself enjoying reading books just like before. I did not stop at this. During the camps, I met friends who were learning foreign languages, and I found this interesting. I took upon learning foreign languages. This is super helpful if you are applying to foreign universities. The second of the camps which I would like to emphasize is on the placement training. This camp conducts hands-on sessions of all the elements that take place at a typical company placement (i.e., aptitude tests, group discussions, stress interviews, personal interviews- both HR and technical). The sessions on aptitude tests were helpful, and I learnt tips and tricks to solve the questions faster. Moreover, the personal interviews were exactly replicated how they are conducted in an actual placement. Despite some grilling questions, the whole set up resulted in positive feedback, which I took with me to my real placements. At the end of my studies, I had got placed in two companies. The training that I received during the VKSSF program has given me an edge during final placements.

However, my ambition did not stop there. I then went to pursue my Masters in Production Development in Sweden and ended up being recruited for a PhD position there. I received constant support and advice from WKC while applying to foreign universities. I also received a scholarship from WKC to pursue my studies abroad. Even while I was studying in Sweden, WKC has always been in touch with me and keeps interest in my development.

As I reflect on my relationship with WKC the past eight years, I consider that it was the best decision to take my camps seriously and put effort while I stayed there. I feel that I have another family through WKC and VKSSF. I have found a lot of inspiration from fellow students I have met there and the facilitators during our camps. The quality of training has been very high, even better than what we get at our college.



It is heartwarming to see the alumni strongly connected even after their camps. We have become a strong network of working professionals. Many of us are working in reputed companies, and we are spread around the world. I had felt immensely proud when I got the opportunity to contribute back to VKSSF both financially and by volunteering at the camps. It makes me glad every time to go to WKC and interact with the future of our country. I am able to share my experience and my perspectives with young scholars in an open environment. I feel that words are short and immeasurable to describe the efforts each person has put in organizing the camps for the past ten years. The 1000 odd alumni together have been creating a self-sustaining ecosystem to support VKSSF in the years ahead to achieve Vision TVM "Let no Konkani child be deprived of education due to lack of means". The efforts of everyone back in my WKC camp days have created a ripple effect to an extent that one needs to see it in order to believe it!

Thank you so much WKC, VKSSF, KSHAMATHA and everyone who were involved in the camps for making dreams to reality.



# Failures make us do better things

**Nirosha Kumari**  
Senior Software Engineer,  
Wipro Limited, Bengaluru

I belong to a Konkani Kharvi nuclear family where I lived with my parents and brother. Having said that, I am happy to have such a supportive family, which is a wonderful gift. From my childhood days, my family was always supportive, be it about my studies or any other curricular activities, which encouraged me to do better in whatever I do.

The major step for me came in 2010, the 12th grade results were released and I was happy as I could see one of my dreams coming true. I chose my merit seat in PESIT Bangalore! Yes, I chose to become an Engineer because I thought it would be a great learning experience! Engineering is the field that solves the most impactful problems and can change the world with inventions and solutions that affect everyone's lives. This is what triggered me to take this decision.

Transitioning from college life to a graduate life in terms of moving to a new place, with new people, with new environment was not easy for me. But this time along with my

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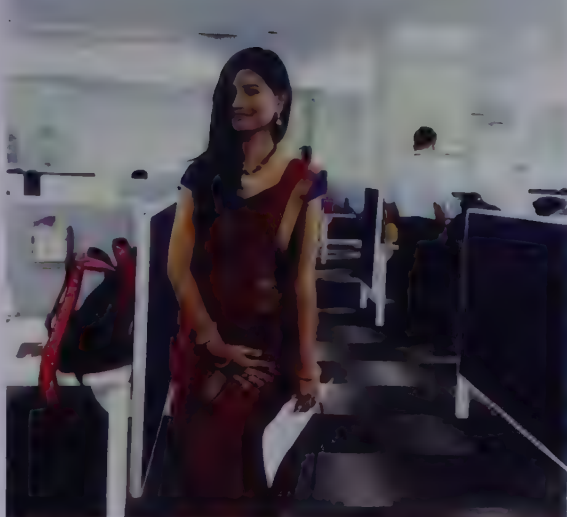
family, yet another family helped me in this phase though I was far away from home, it was WKC.



I never imagined being a scholar of VKSSF would also help me grow as a more confident person. WKC not only provided me with a scholarship, but also helped me bring out the best in me. The camps and events organized by WKC for VKSSF scholars helped me in many ways. It helped me improve my vocabulary and made me confident of what I have to convey to others and helped me do so more effectively. I also got to meet a lot of new people and made new friends who were scholars at WKC who had different thought patterns, which also helped me learn new things, broaden my mindset and it also became easy for me to mingle with people faster than ever. I can say, WKC was a stepping stone to my career.

I started my career at Ericsson, Bangalore as a graduate software developer. I have had the opportunity to get along with many people not only from India but also from Germany and I think what truly was helpful is their uniqueness. This made me recollect the initial WKC moments of meeting new people. Initially getting along with all the new scholars was not that easy for me but eventually I did. This transition helped me in my career. Being mentored from someone to mentoring someone always made me learn new things. After 3 years of good experience, I switched to Wipro where I found similar environment but different set of people from whom I could learn new things. In Wipro, I was working for Cisco as a client, where I got a different experience of interacting with US customers directly to handle the tasks. Also, I got the chance to learn new technologies which made me grow technically strong.

Apart from my career, I also had a passion for Music. My mother was always supportive of it and with that I cleared my junior level Hindustani classical singing. Some say it's a gift that I can sing but I say unless you recognize what is within you and put your efforts and spend time on practicing, nothing can be achieved; may it be music or anything for that matter. From my childhood days, I started to sing and as I grew up, I started to analyze my mistakes and correct it, whenever I got a chance, I used to perform, in my school, college, company or any other occasion. The feedback which I received helped me correct my mistakes many a times. Also, WKC helped me



meet many scholars who are interested in the Musical field, which helped me understand few other musical aspects. One thing which I learnt in this journey of mine is, failures always makes us do better things. So, don't wait for opportunities to come to you when you have a chance, just grab it, irrespective of the result, we always have room learning.

As the journey of life continued, I got an opportunity to become the president of VAA. Initially I did feel, it's a huge responsibility, I questioned myself whether I would be able to handle it or not. But then again, I remembered what WKC taught me, to grab the opportunity when we have a chance. Also, there was lot of motivation from the mentors of WKC who were available to help out. Being the President of VAA, makes me feel great as I am getting to know more scholars and alumni who are interested in building this community, which is the main aim of vision TVM 2030. Also being a scholar of VKSSF I feel, I should also be contributing and helping scholars of WKC. I think it's time, VAA alumni should also be helping the scholars may it be by guiding them or by contributing to the alumni scholarship fund. I'm sure WKC would help all the scholars succeed in their life, as it helped me to setup my career. Let's connect and build the network!



## From a larva to now flying high in the sky!

**Karan Kini K.**

Engineer,  
Quest Global, Bengaluru

I have come a long way from where I was, having started my journey with WKC in September 2012. All along the way, I have only gotten better and have seen only highs; unlike other such long journeys. Although it would not be possible to describe this incredible journey in words, I have tried to put in words, what can best be called as my metamorphosis.

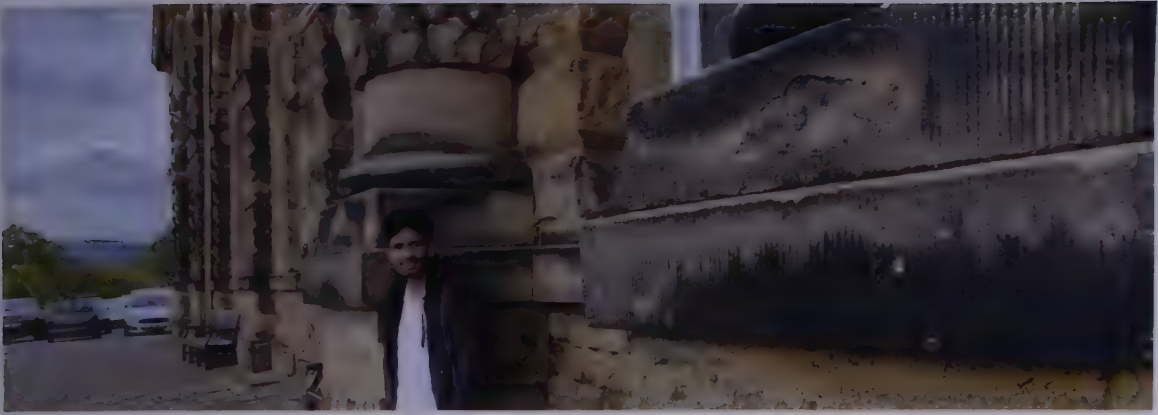
To start with, I was fortunate enough to get to know about WKC and the Vishwa Konkani Student Scholarship Fund just in the nick of time. I secured 89.92% in my II P.U.C and wanted to take up Engineering with Aeronautical Engineering as the branch of specialization.

It was tough as I knew that my family was not strong enough financially to bear the cost of the entire course for four years. My parents were having a tough time as well because they wanted my dreams to come true at any cost. It was at this difficult time that I got to know about the scholarship by WKC from one of my relatives and I instantly decided to apply for the same. The scholarship process in itself was very professional which had me on the edge of my toes until I was selected and the moment I got confirmation of the scholarship, it was a

**As it is said, “Some things cannot be expressed, they just need to be experienced”, volunteering being one of those.**

celebration at my home! I got into the scholarship programme, not knowing at the time that I had made a decision which would be a significant turning point and would change my life forever!





Being a scholar at WKC required that I attend two residential training camps a year, 3 days each, which I was made aware of at the time of application of the scholarship. This had me excited as to what the camps will be about; how I would cope with the challenges I may face etc. The training camps are for the overall development of all scholars, preparing them for their corporate careers and most of all, shaping their lives. By the end of the first camp, while I gained many things, I lost some too. Well, as they say, to gain some, we have to lose some. In this case, I gained confidence, exposure and many other positives and lost my stage-fear along with all other insecurities in exchange. With every camp, the personality development was significant in me and I was being taught everything that is required to be successful in the corporate world. I cannot find enough words to thank the facilitators in all these camps for their contribution in moulding me.

Along with the regular camps, I was also given numerous opportunities to be a volunteer at other camps, programmes and events at WKC. Volunteering at WKC is a different learning experience in itself. I could very well explain what I learnt by volunteering at the camps, only that it would go on for pages. As it is said, "Some things cannot be expressed, they just need to be experienced", volunteering being one of those. To put it in simple words, the camp connects us to ourselves and few others, volunteering connects us to something much larger, to the network, to the bond and more importantly to the Vision of VKSSF!

Every single time I volunteer at WKC, every single event that I am part of and every single time I visit WKC, I get connected more and more with this vision. I had tears in my eyes when I

heard TVM sir once say that "It is not the person giving scholarship who is great, but it is that person who is accepting it is great", "Giving is not charity; Giving is not concern, GIVING IS AN OBLIGATION". Ever since I heard this, I have decided that, I will give everything that I can and contribute in every possible way to make the "VISION TVM 2030", a reality.

WKC helped me get my engineering degree, more significantly, it helped me get my first job but most of all WKC has given me values for life. The wonderful aspect of WKC is that, all of the people associated with it are a source of inspiration and from each of these people, I have learnt a value. Be it goodwill, kindness and love for the mother-tongue from Vaman Maam, courage, motivation, simplicity and selflessness from TVM sir, Ullas sir, Ramadas sir and Pradeep sir, honesty, dedication and commitment from Giri sir, Guru Sir and Sahanakka, I could go on and on. In the past 7 years, all these wonderful people together have transformed me from being a larva to now flying high in the sky!

To all those scholars who will soon be a part of this programme, welcome to our family! You have made the best decision of your life. To all my fellow alumni, today, there are over a 1000 of us and with such a number; there is nothing that we cannot do. The real success of the scholarship programme is when the alumni come back and pay it forward. Our mentors have done their part and it is now upon us to come together and take the responsibility. WKC, VKSSF and KSHAMATA have played an integral part in our success and it's now our turn to play an integral part in taking it forward!

"Come, let's join hands, let us grow and let the Konkani community grow with us!"



## WKC helped me proceed with positivism and boldness

*Venkatesh Prabhu K.*  
SRE, PayPal

**T**he year was 2010. I was 16 years old and studying my 2nd year in the pre university course in Kundapura, when I decided to do Computer Science and Engineering. The plan was to prepare well for KCET, achieve a high rank and join an esteemed university in Bangalore to achieve my dreams. However, my (family's) financial status didn't reflect my dreams. While I was carefully reviewing my suitable higher education options, I came across World Konkani Centre's Scholarship which was offering enough monetary support for me to convince my parents that I can pull this through without being a burden on them. Of course, there was a Government Merit Quota called super numerary quota which helped my cause. At that point in time, I didn't have any idea about how WKC was going to change my life, but as far as my education was concerned, the monetary support was highly important.

There were a lot of clauses in the scholarship application, one of which was to dedicate a few days of my time to WKC every year. I was never skeptical about this as I was only looking forward to these days despite not knowing what or how WKC is or going to be and I planned to give twice the support that I was going to receive irrespective of whether it was mentioned

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**There was an ocean of knowledge walking down in front of me in the form of excellent fellow scholars during these camps, each and every person taught me something.**

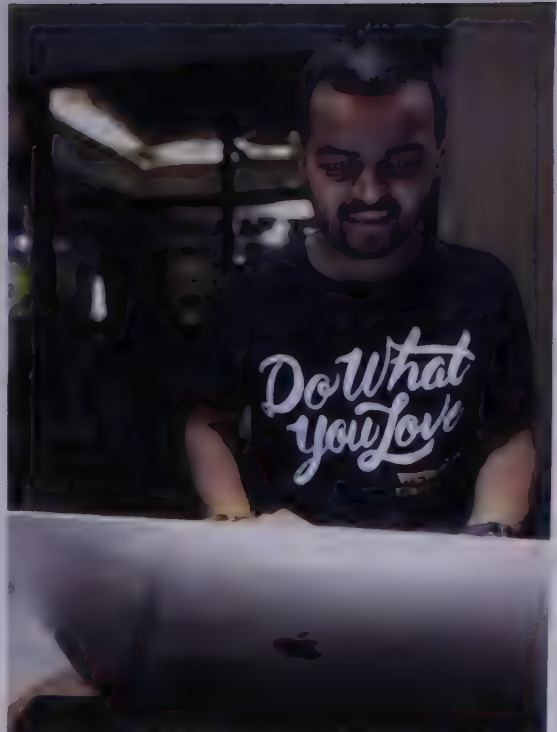
to me or not. The scholar selection process was thorough and over 100 Konkani speaking students across the country were selected that year and I was lucky enough to be part of this elite group. And today, in 2019, VKSSF has extended support for higher education across the world to these scholars.



I still remember my first day at the first camp of WKC where I was excited to get to know a lot of people. To be honest, I had no idea what to expect from this camp, neither did the other 30 scholars who were with me. But this first camp along with 5 others to come during the next 5 semesters helped me realize where I stand in various aspects of education which include communication, social skills, professionalism and technical expertise. There was an ocean of knowledge walking down in front of me in the form of excellent fellow scholars during these camps, each and every person taught me something. The trainers for these camps were all professional and nothing short of the corporate trainers that are accessible only after paying millions of rupees. There was a plethora of information that was being fed to us in the form of engaging activities, movies, games, tests and many other activities. The amount of effort that was put to help us achieve our dreams was humongous.

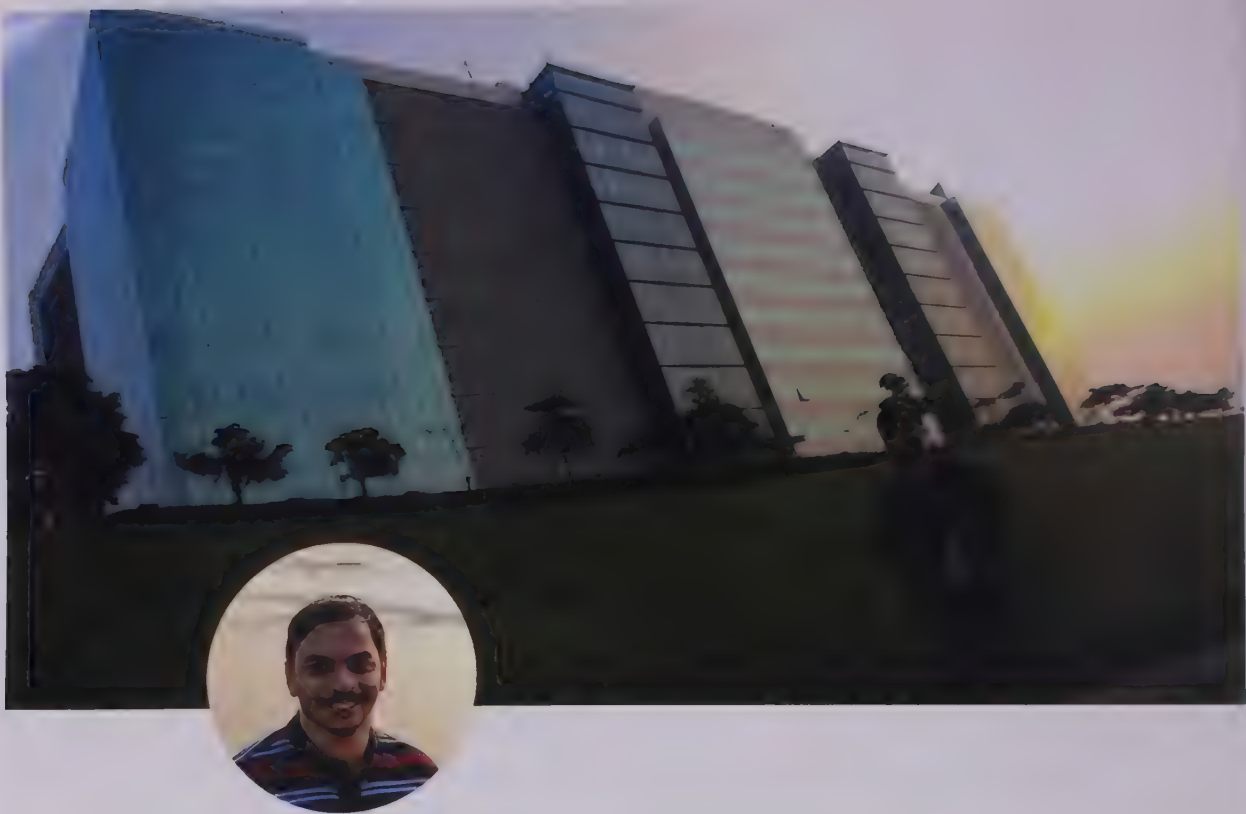
The lessons that I learnt at WKC are invaluable to me. These are the reasons that made me who I am today. I still remember the second day of my first camp during which I overslept and missed a good 30 minutes of my first session on that day, at WKC we still talk and laugh about that day. From there, to a person who constantly works hard to achieve better things in life, WKC has provided me everything. It has provided me friends for life, educated me about social and cultural values, helped me build my professional and technical expertise, and provided me the financial support that was needed to achieve my dream that I started dreaming about 10 years ago.

As VISION TVM 2030 states, WKC helped me proceed with positivism and boldness. It helps strengthen our community and make it a strong motivating force in the society. It's an invaluable part of my life. As I am writing this, sitting in my cozy office at Bangalore, I, along with hundreds of other alumni of VKSSF, aspire to build (or rather replace VKSSF with) a scholarship program that is fully funded by us in the near



future. It's the least we can do, to show our gratitude to the organization and community that gave us so much.

"I try to contribute in some way to WKC but doesn't really feel adequate". These are the words of an alumni who is working at a great organization in Hyderabad. She is not alone. Many of us alumni feel the same. I hope that along with her, we all come together and build a strong alumni network which mentors the junior scholars and guides them in this competitive world. I hope that we will all be role models to every single VKSSF scholar out there, today. I wish that we grow together and build a stronger community than what we are today.



## I carry on WKC's legacy as its brand ambassador

**Vasanth Bhakta**  
Consultant, Capgemini

It is often said "Everything happens for a reason". It is in the year 2010, exactly a decade ago I began to realize how true are these powerful words. As I finished off with my 12th board exams and Karnataka Common Entrance Test, the only confusion I had in my mind was from which college do I pursue my Engineering. When I began to realize even if I am able to secure merit seat with good rank it may not be affordable enough to someone who belonged to lower middle class family, it almost shattered my dreams. But one fine day, my dad showed me an ad from Vishwa Konkani Kendra regarding the scholarship in one of the local newspapers it revived my dreams again. I decided to apply for the same and I was able to secure the scholarship along with 150 odd aspirants that year.

I still vividly remember attending maiden scholarship distribution function at TV Raman Pai Hall and receiving the cheque from the dignitaries who have achieved great heights in their lives and now doing the job of giving it back to the society. I was mesmerized by witnessing how simple and down to earth these dignitaries were despite achieving a lot in life be it money or respect in their lives and chosen field. I realized how lucky I am to be part of this event and was an eye

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opener in true sense.

The most interesting journey started when we attended our first camp. I attended the camp with zero expectations and made few friends in the first day of the camp. Soft skills sessions from Mr. Late Mahesh Bhagwandas is something I am never going to forget ever in my life. Every subsequent



camp we attended was a learning in one aspect or the other. Being from maiden batch, we did not have any clue how each camp would turn out for us in terms of learning something new. As we attended camps after every semester exam, the bondage among all the scholars grew stronger. We would learn from each other's mistakes, encourage each other in overcoming each other's shortcomings and come out stronger than ever at the end of each camp. From a guy with absolutely zero confidence, WKC molded me into a confident person by the end of all the camps.

As I stepped into new chapter of my life in the year 2014, the skills that I acquired from WKC was put into practice at my workplace. It is then when I realized the importance of each camp I attended in the true sense. I was able to clear aptitude exams and Group discussions in flying colors. Although, there was a minor struggle involved in securing my first job I was confident to get a job eventually. I was adjudged as one of the brightest employees among my batch who joined the company with me that year as I was already ahead of the game when it comes to soft skills. I took up lots of leadership roles in my team voluntarily which made me fall into the radar of higher management in my project. I was continuously able to achieve high performer ratings consistently. Thanks to WKC.

Soon I started to realize that we are no more scholars of WKC but now we have become an alumni of WKC. It meant we had reached a stage where hundreds of scholars would be looking

towards us for guidance and support. I had decided by then that I would actively help my juniors in helping to resolve anything that we have learnt from our experience. This is the least we could do to help realize the dreams that was once seen by great personalities like TV Mohandas Pai whose mission is to make Konkani community a prosperous one by the year 2030.

We are indebted to WKC for all the monetary support and the training provided by them in order to improve our personality without which we would never be able to achieve a little we have achieved till today. I always believe it is more important to give back to the society what the society has given us. But the most important thing that one can give back to the society is his personal TIME. Since 2014, I have been actively participating in Alumni conducted activities and would be continuing to do so in the future too. End of the day, we belong to the corporate world and corporate world purely works on Teamwork and Leadership skills. We have imbibed this skill from WKC itself and continue to apply in various stages of our lives.

In the end, I would like to conclude by quoting my dad who once said- "You would not have been able to complete your Engineering if you hadn't been able to secure scholarship from WKC". Such is an impact WKC has had in my life today and I would carry on its legacy as a brand ambassador and alumni of such a great organization.



## My initiatives, helped me take actions I otherwise would not.

**Royal Sequeira**

Machine Learning Developer,  
ADA Support, Canada

In the year 2011, when I graduated from St. Aloysius PU College, I was almost a mess. As the regular teenagers of my age, I was less ambitious, less proactive, and more belligerent towards my parents. Although not from an economically-well-to-do family, I had given up all hopes on scouting around for a scholarship that would make my otherwise expensive engineering education affordable. Naturally, I was thrilled when one of my neighbours mentioned about World Konkani Centre (WKC) and its scholarship program. As the future would have it, WKC did not turn out to be yet another scholarship-awarding organization, but an institution of steadfast dedication that helps its scholars become a better version of themselves.

Like every WKC alum would testify, my first soft-skills-training camp at the centre had a tremendous impact on me. Soon after the camp, when I went back to school, I found myself more proactive and sociable. I seized every opportunity that came my way — I enrolled into online courses, studied French, presented seminars, and widened my network. In the subsequent camps, I improved my language skills, leadership abilities, and prepared myself to face the trying corporate culture. I will not burden you with the elaborate details about what I learned back in all those years, but suffice it is to

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mention that the camps catered to my needs as an engineering student with a ravenous hunger for knowledge.

My efforts did not go in vain. My initiatives, however insignificant, helped me take actions that I otherwise would not. I got into two great internships at the prestigious Indian Institute of Science (IISc), published several research papers,



and eventually got to work at Microsoft Research India (MSRI) as a Research Assistant. In the end, I got into a fully-funded Masters in Computer Science program at University of Waterloo (UWaterloo). At UWaterloo, I was awarded the reputable David R. Cheriton scholarship that is awarded to the very top students on the basis of academic excellence and research calibre. During my stay at MSRI and UWaterloo, I published several research papers at top-tier conferences like ACL (Association for Computational Linguistics) and SIGIR (Special Interest Group on Information Retrieval).

There must be something magical about WKC, and its agenda on creating wonderful memories. I have always felt bonded to the institute, and have always wondered about the ways I can contribute to Vision TVM 2030. Today, I work as a Machine Learning Developer for a company in downtown Toronto. In all these years, I have never forgotten WKC. Despite the distance and the time lag, I have always been present for the new WKC opportunities: to be a great mentor! I have been guiding my juniors by serving as a facilitator for the WKC camps. I have also been remotely mentoring a batch of 125 students (aka Hustlers), who have already begun to exhibit great potential.



Considering it has been several years, it is hard to recollect in detail and pen down all my experiences, or to articulate them in a manner of an evocative speech. Yet, I can say with great conviction that the opportunities provided by WKC have made me the person that I am today, and for which I am forever grateful.



## From village in Udupi to United Nations Assembly Hall

**Dinesh Pai K.**

Consultant,  
Ernst and Young LLP, Canada

**W**hen I look back at the past 10 years of my life, I realize my deep-rooted relationship with World Konkani Center (WKC). From educational stints to professional careers, VKSSF has had a profound impact on my character, demeanor, and mindset. There is something spectacularly special about WKC. From the moment I walked in, I felt home, it was a perfect fit. And even today, 12000 miles away from home, I am fortunate to be part of a thriving VKSSF alumni community.

I recollect the year 2010, the year I began on my journey towards becoming an Engineer. Hailing from Kokkarne, a small town in the district of Udupi, never did I imagine that I would travel all the way to the garden city of Bangalore for my Engineering degree. Growing up, I watched all my cousins take up engineering degree and it was my goal too to follow them in their footsteps. Of course, I had to finance the degree and I was unsure where the capital would come from. As CET counselling came to an end, I had gotten myself enrolled at RV College in Bangalore. And days went by, but I was yet to get the bank loan sanctioned. And it was then that I heard of the WKC Scholarship. I remember applying for it and being



hopeful for the best. I am not able to put into words, the relief that I felt after being granted scholarships. WKC made it possible that I began my journey as an engineering graduate.

At WKC, I remember attending the KSHAMATA camps during semester breaks and it was then that I made friends who will last a lifetime. I remember learning humility, to see 30 odd smarter people around me was an eye-opener. I understood values such as empathy, determination, and discipline from my fellow scholars in WKC. The values I gained at WKC have





gotten me through numerous difficult times at the workplace and that is a testimony to the scholarship program. To be recognized as a scholar at WKC also meant that my efforts and determination had to continue. I genuinely felt I was part of two separate educational institutions, one in my engineering college and the other being WKC. The trainings we received as scholarship recipients was not only contemporary but also outstanding on concepts and quality. And I am delighted to report that the program has evolved over the years into what it is today, a structured and proven training program that churns out professionals. And as my journey as a scholar at WKC came to an end in 2015, I began my journey as a professional and alumni of WKC.

Fast forward 4 more years, it is 2019, and I have now acquired my MBA from University of Calgary, Canada. I am working with Ernst and Young as a Consultant in a city that I walked in 2 years ago. I represented India at the United Nations as a Youth Delegate in 2018. Did I remotely imagine myself one day standing in the General Assembly Hall of United nations? Of course not, it was most probably improbable that it would happen. And yes, all the achievements I began this paragraph with, would not have been possible but for the support I have received. I recorded a message for WKC from the General Assembly Hall, and the video represents World Konkani Center and not Dinesh Pai at an international convention, and that provided a sense of belonging to the Kendra. I am humbled by the support I have received from WKC and all members associated with it. However, I do know that all the support has motivated me to play a constant role in helping VKSSF evolve into a self-running machine that helps students from the Konkani community achieve their dreams. Vision TVM has been guiding me for the past 10 years and it will continue to do so for the coming years in the future. And as scholars of WKC go out into the world, I am confident they will always come back to contribute and help others in need. The alumni association of VKSSF is growing from strength to strength and am confident that soon alumni's will be able to

own a significant portion of the scholarship program and ensure that scholarship initiatives run without interruption for all years to come.

I also must mention my stint as the President of VKSSF Alumni Association (VAA). And I must admit, it was a role I took on seriously and tried my very best. I will always be grateful for having gotten the opportunity to experience leadership practically. The learning I received has shaped every ounce of character in me. I am certain not everything went to plan, but the people I worked with, my fellow alumni's, ensured that we pulled through. I recollect various instances where we relied on each other and helped each other, we unified under one goal. I have become more resilient to change and I feel empowered to adapt to situations. The affection of everyone around me will always have me feeling indebted. So, a huge thank you to all the people who made it possible that I learn and grow with every passing day.

The list of fond memories from WKC are never-ending and I can go on for a few pages. But I will conclude by saying that I feel fortunate to have met people at WKC who treat me like one of their own. I undoubtedly appreciate what I have and am aware that I should pay all the support I received forward. TVM Sir, Ramdas Sir, and Pradeep sir, the leaders of the program, I thank them wholeheartedly for how their vision has empowered me to be who I am today.

To end this testimonial, I say, I have become a better person since 2010 and that will be something nobody can take away from me. A heartfelt thank you for all that you have done for me, WKC.

**Representing WKC and India at the United Nations as a Youth Delegate helped me understand why relentless pursuit of goals leads to realization of dreams and aspirations.**





## Lack of exposure was a big hurdle for me

**Niveditha Shenoy B.**

Software Engineer,  
Microsoft, Seattle (USA)

I completed my initial schooling in Gonikoppal, a small town in Coorg. Growing up, the lack of exposure was a big hurdle for me to grow and learn. I always took it up as a challenge and worked very hard using whatever minimal facilities were available. My eagerness to learn bolstered me to complete my Bachelors in Computer Science and Engineering from R.V. College of Engineering, Bangalore and then complete my Masters in Computer Science from Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. I am currently working as a Software Developer at Microsoft, Redmond. In my journey so far one of the most memorable events was being introduced to the wonderful Vishwa Konkani community through their Scholarship programme.

The scholarship programme not only helped me financially with my tuition, but also introduced me to a wonderful community of people who have helped me grow, encouraged me to do better and corrected me when I was wrong. Vishwa Konkani helped me get closer to the Konkani language and culture. The best part of the scholarship programme was the camps conducted after every semester. There was always something exciting to look forward to. We were always put outside our comfort zone and at the end of the camp, we always learnt something new. The various group discussions and mock interviews improved my confidence. Having a growth mindset and being open to discussions in order to learn something new was something that the camps taught me and which I have incorporated into my life in order to be more successful and confident.

Now, Vishwa Konkani is not just an organization. It is a family to me. I'm grateful to everything this organization has given to

me and feel privileged to be a part of the Alumni organization.

Being a part of the executive council helped me take part in a lot of charity events. I'm really happy and proud to see the progress made by the Vishwa Konkani Alumni Association. I am trying to give back to the community by sponsoring at least one student a year and I urge everyone to take a step forward and actively give back to the community since a community can only survive when the alumni gives back. I request all the Alumni to actively take part and volunteer in various events conducted by the Alumni association.

Vishwa Konkani has been an extremely important part of my Student life and the friends I have made here inspire me to this day. It helped me build a strong network and develop connections. I realise the impact it has on my career as well as my personal life to this day and will be forever indebted to it.

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**Vishwa Konkani  
helped me get closer  
to the Konkani  
language and  
culture.**

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